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(Original Signature of Member)

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. _____

To require the Secretary of Agriculture to submit a report to Congress on Department of Agriculture spending related to seafood purchases and grants, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. PALLONE introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To require the Secretary of Agriculture to submit a report to Congress on Department of Agriculture spending related to seafood purchases and grants, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Supporting Equity for
5 Aquaculture and Seafood Act” or the “SEAS Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. REPORT ON USDA SEAFOOD PURCHASES AND**
2 **GRANTS.**

3 Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment
4 of this Act, and annually thereafter through fiscal year
5 2026, the Secretary of Agriculture shall submit to Con-
6 gress a report that includes, with respect to the previous
7 fiscal year—

8 (1) the total amount of expenditures of the De-
9 partment of Agriculture on seafood purchases and
10 aquaculture purchases and the value of such expend-
11 itures;

12 (2) the total amount of expenditures of the De-
13 partment on seafood and aquaculture promotion and
14 outreach supporting the seafood and aquaculture in-
15 dustries and the value of such expenditures;

16 (3) the number of grants made by the Secretary
17 of Agriculture to the seafood and aquaculture indus-
18 tries, and the amount of such grants; and

19 (4) the number of grants made by the Secretary
20 of Agriculture to facilitate seafood and aquaculture
21 research, the amount of such grants, and the subject
22 matter of such research.

1 **SEC. 3. REPORT ON USDA SUPPORT FOR AQUACULTURE**
2 **AND THE SEAFOOD INDUSTRY.**

3 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 2 years after the
4 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agri-
5 culture shall submit to Congress a report—

6 (1) evaluating the Department of Agriculture’s
7 role in supporting aquaculture and the seafood in-
8 dustry;

9 (2) evaluating the domestic seafood processing
10 capacity of the United States and the impact of
11 overseas processing on domestic supply chains, aqua-
12 culture, and the seafood industry;

13 (3) examining the access to the Department of
14 Agriculture’s grants and resources aquaculture and
15 seafood producers have, as compared to traditional
16 land-based farmers; and

17 (4) evaluating the potential environmental bene-
18 fits of aquaculture, with respect to climate, conserva-
19 tion, and pollution;

20 (5) evaluating the potential negative impacts of
21 aquaculture, with respect to pollution, waste, dis-
22 ease, and other repercussions; and

23 (6) providing recommendations to support and
24 advance best practice for aquaculture in the United
25 States.

26 (b) DEFINITIONS.—In this Act:

1 (1) AQUACULTURE.—The term “aquaculture”
2 means the controlled breeding, rearing, and har-
3 vesting of fish, shellfish, sea vegetables and other or-
4 ganisms in freshwater, saltwater, and any other con-
5 trolled water environments.

6 (2) SEAFOOD INDUSTRY.—The term “seafood
7 industry” means shellfish growers, shellfish har-
8 vesters, sea vegetable growers, fish farmers, com-
9 mercial fishermen that harvest shellfish or finfish,
10 and other aquaculture producers.

11 **SEC. 4. USDA INTERNAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENT.**

12 (a) IN GENERAL.—Subtitle B of the Department of
13 Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 6931
14 et seq.) is amended by inserting after section 226B (7
15 U.S.C. 6934) the following:

16 **“SEC. 226C. AQUACULTURE EDUCATION.**

17 “(a) FSA OFFICES.— The Secretary shall develop
18 and implement a requirement for employees of each re-
19 gional office of the Farm Service Agency with respect to
20 education on aquaculture. Such requirement shall include
21 training for all existing and new employees on—

22 “(1) eligibility for aquaculture-related Federal
23 grants and programs;

24 “(2) the role of aquaculture in United States
25 agriculture; and

1 “(3) the support the Department of Agriculture
2 provides to seafood producers and aquaculture.

3 “(b) MEMORANDUM.—Not later than 2 years after
4 the date of the enactment of this section, the Secretary
5 shall issue a department-wide memorandum that—

6 “(1) affirms the Department of Agriculture’s
7 current position that aquaculture plays a vital role
8 in the United States agriculture system; and

9 “(2) reiterates the eligibility of aquaculture and
10 seafood products and producers for programs admin-
11 istered by the Secretary.

12 “(c) WEBINARS.— The Secretary shall, beginning not
13 later than 2 years after the date of the enactment of this
14 section and every 2 years thereafter, convene a conference
15 (including a conference held on a virtual platform or
16 through webinars) providing for education of officers and
17 employees of the Department of Agriculture and relevant
18 stakeholders on the state of aquaculture in the United
19 States.”.

20 (b) TECHNICAL CORRECTION.—Effective as if in-
21 cluded in the enactment of the Agricultural Act of 2018,
22 subtitle A of the Department of Agriculture Reorganiza-
23 tion Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 6912 et seq.) is amended by
24 redesignating the first section 225 (7 U.S.C. 6925) (relat-
25 ing to the Food Access Liaison) as section 224A.

1 **SEC. 5. REGIONAL AQUACULTURE CENTERS.**

2 (a) EXTENSION.— Section 1477(a) of the National
3 Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy
4 Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3324(a)) is amended—

5 (1) in paragraph (1), by striking “and” at the
6 end;

7 (2) in paragraph (2), by striking the period at
8 the end and inserting “; and”; and

9 (3) by adding at the end the following:

10 “(3) to carry out subsection (b), \$30,000,000
11 for each of fiscal years 2024 through 2028.”.

12 (b) INDIRECT COSTS.—Section 1477 of the National
13 Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy
14 Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3324) is amended by adding at
15 the end the following:

16 “(c) INDIRECT COSTS.—Of the funds made available
17 under subsection (a) to carry out this section for a fiscal
18 year, not more than 15 percent may be used for expenses
19 related to administering the program under this section.”.

20 **SEC. 6. SHELLFISH RESEARCH UNDER AGRICULTURE AND**
21 **FOOD RESEARCH INITIATIVE.**

22 (a) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (b)(2)(B)(i) of the
23 Competitive, Special, and Facilities Research Grant Act
24 (7 U.S.C. 3157(b)(2)(B)(i)) is amended to read as follows:

25 “(i)(I) aquaculture; and

1 “(II) methods of increasing survival
2 rate and adaptability of shellfish, including
3 resistance to heat, disease, salinity, and
4 acidification;”.

5 (b) DEVELOPING NEXT GENERATION TECHNOLOGY
6 FOR THE SEAFOOD AND AQUACULTURE INDUSTRIES.—
7 Title IX of the Food Security and Rural Investment Act
8 of 2002 (7 U.S.C. 8101 et seq.) is amended by adding
9 at the end the following:

10 **“SEC. 9015. DEVELOPING NEXT GENERATION TECHNOLOGY**
11 **FOR THE SEAFOOD AND AQUACULTURE IN-**
12 **DUSTRIES.**

13 “(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, in consultation
14 with the heads of other relevant Federal agencies, shall
15 make competitive grants to eligible entities to develop next
16 generation technology, which may include more efficient
17 gear and equipment, to reduce pollution and fuel usage
18 in the seafood and aquaculture industries.

19 “(b) ELIGIBLE ENTITY DEFINED.—The term ‘eligi-
20 ble entity’ includes a regional aquaculture center estab-
21 lished under section 1475 of the National Agricultural Re-
22 search, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7
23 U.S.C. 3322), institution of higher education, federally-
24 funded research and development center, and an organiza-
25 tion organization described in section 501(c)(5) of the In-

1 ternal Revenue Code of 1986 and exempt from taxation
2 under section 501(a) of such Code.

3 “(c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
4 are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section
5 \$10,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2024 through 2028.”.

6 **SEC. 7. GRANT PROGRAMS.**

7 (a) IN GENERAL.—In awarding grants (or other as-
8 sistance), the Secretary shall give the same consideration
9 to aquaculture producers as animal agriculture producers.

10 (b) AQUACULTURE FUNDING.—The Secretary shall
11 ensure adequate and fair funding levels are made available
12 to aquaculture producers through grants (or other assist-
13 ance) under Department of Agriculture programs.

14 (c) ANIMAL AGRICULTURE DEFINED.—The term
15 “animal agriculture” means the raising, breeding, har-
16 vesting, and slaughtering of beef, lamb, goat, pork, duck,
17 poultry, and other land-based organisms for consumption
18 and the production of animal products, including milk,
19 eggs, meat, skins, fibers, bones, feathers, and other by-
20 products.

21 **SEC. 8. CROP INSURANCE.**

22 Section 522(c) of the Agricultural Adjustment Act of
23 1938 (7 U.S.C. 1522) is amended by adding at the end
24 the following:

25 “(20) AQUACULTURE PRODUCTS.—

1 “(A) IN GENERAL.—The Corporation shall
2 carry out research and development, or offer to
3 enter into 1 or more contracts with 1 or more
4 qualified persons to carry out research and de-
5 velopment, regarding a policy to insure aqua-
6 culture products.

7 “(B) AVAILABILITY.—The Corporation
8 shall establish a policy to insure aquaculture
9 products for the first reinsurance year that be-
10 gins after the date of the enactment of this
11 paragraph.”.